

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 03461

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINR, IN
SUBJ: K. B. LALL -- INDIAN CANDIDATE FOR UN DEPUTY
SECRETARY GENERAL

REF: STATE 39627

1. DURING THE NEARLY TWO YEARS THAT I KNEW K.B. LALL IN HIS SECOND TOUR HERE AS INDIAN AMBASSADOR (1973-77), HE STRUCK ME AS AN EXTREMELY ABLE EXPONENT OF INDIAN VIEWS WHO WAS, AT THE SAME TIME, FAIRLY MODERATE--AT LEAST IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH ME--ON ISSUES RELATED TO THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE AND TO LDC INTERESTS GENERALLY. LALL SEEMED WELL DISPOSED TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT LALL THOUGHT WELL OF HIMSELF, AND HE NEVER LEFT ME IN DOUBT THAT HE EXERCISED CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE IN GOVERNMENT CIRCLES IN DELHI. BUT I ASSUMED THEN AND ASSUME TODAY THAT HIS RICH BACKGROUND IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICE GAVE HIM PLAUSIBLE GROUNDS FOR DOING SO.

2. AS FOR THE SIDE OF LALL DESCRIBED IN PARA 2 REFTEL, I CAN BELIEVE IT, EXCEPT THAT HE WAS NEVER "ABRASIVE" WITH ME. OF COURSE THAT PARTICULAR QUALITY MAY BE MORE
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RELEVANT TO GETTING AHEAD IN THE INDIAN BUREAUCRACY THAN TO CONDUCTING A DIPLOMATIC MISSION ABROAD.

3. IN ANY CASE, IT ALWAYS SEEMED TO ME THAT INDIAN INTERESTS, NOT GENERAL LDC INTERESTS, WERE LALL'S FIRST CONCERN. HE ALSO STRUCK ME AS SURPRISINGLY THEORETICAL FOR A MAN OF HIS EXPERIENCE AND THUS SOMETIMES LACKING

IN PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND
INVESTMENT. FINALLY, MY IMPRESSION IS THAT IN RECENT
YEARS HE IS MUCH LESS THE HARD CHARGER OF EARLIER REPUTE.

4. ONE COULD DO MUCH WORSE IN SELECTING A UN DEPUTY
SECRETARY GENERAL. DEPENDING ON WHAT WE WANT, AND ON THE
OTHER CANDIDATES, ONE MIGHT ALSO DO BETTER. HINTON

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